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Security Council

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Letter dated 3 July 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of Rwanda, the Security Council is scheduled to hold an open debate on the theme "United Nations peacekeeping operations: the United Nations and regional partnership and its evolution".

The open debate will be held on Monday, 28 July 2014. In order to help steer the discussion on the subject, Rwanda has prepared the attached concept note (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Eugene-Richard **Gasana**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 3 July 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note

July 2014 Security Council open debate on the theme "United Nations peacekeeping operations: the United Nations and regional partnership and its evolution"

I. Introduction

Demand for international peace operations remains high, while the willingness of the international community to intervene is declining and defence budgets continue to shrink. The notion of collective responsibility and greater regionalization in security thus continues to enjoy growing appeal. In Africa, this notion has been put to the test with the development of regional standby brigades and the deployment of regional and joint peacekeeping missions. Considerable difficulties remain, however, and peacekeeping in Africa will continue to require external support for the foreseeable future.

It is in this framework that the Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the United Nations, during Rwanda's presidency of the Security Council in July 2014, will convene an open debate of the Security Council on the theme "United Nations peacekeeping operations: the United Nations and regional partnership and its evolution", which is scheduled to take place on 28 July 2014.

II. Background

The Charter of the United Nations, under its Chapter VIII, provides for the participation of regional arrangements in the maintenance of international peace and security, particularly as first responders to ensure "pacific settlement of local disputes" before referring the disputes to the Security Council. Chapter VIII also provides that the Security Council shall, where appropriate, utilize such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under its authority, but the Charter goes ahead to precondition the "enforcement action" on Security Council authorization. It is important that we discuss and evaluate the progress of the partnership between regional organizations and the Security Council in peacekeeping operations, which is one of the enforcement actions used by the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The tragedies of Rwanda and Srebrenica demonstrated the failures of United Nations peacekeeping in the 1990s and the dire need for rapid regional engagement and response mechanisms. The Brahimi report (A/55/305-S/2000/809), written in 2000 in response to these failures, made a number of recommendations designed to improve operational and doctrinal aspects of peacekeeping, including the need for the participation of regional and subregional organizations in the establishment and maintenance of peace and security. As a result, missions following the publication of the Brahimi report have been characterized by increasing participation of

non-United Nations third parties and regional organizations, including the African Union, the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community, among others.

III. Current trends

We find it appropriate to take stock of the partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations in peacekeeping operations, especially on the African continent, where capabilities have been tested more than ever, such as the United Nations engagement in a hybrid peacekeeping operation, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). We should also look at models of financial and technical support by the United Nations and the European Union to Africa-led peacekeeping operations. Yet we should look as well at cases where regional organizations have deployed their forces to restore stability and set a suitable environment for a United Nations peacekeeping operations deployment, the Africa-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) and the Africa-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA), among others. We should also consider the readiness of the United Nations to support aspirations of regional or subregional organizations in the maintenance of peace and security in their region, through the deployment of their own forces, like the deployment of the Protection and Deterrent Force by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to contribute to restoring peace and stability in South Sudan.

Regional and subregional organizations in Darfur, Somalia, Mali, Central African Republic and South Sudan have gone to great lengths in their support of the United Nations and have demonstrated an invaluable presence. Below are some of the existing peacekeeping operations that may indicate evolution of the partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations, especially with the African Union.

Situation in the Sudan/Darfur: In 2004, the African Union deployed a peacekeeping mission to the Sudan, which received support from the European Union, the United Nations and NATO before it was replaced in 2008 by the unprecedented joint African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, the first hybrid mission between the United Nations and the African Union and the largest peacekeeping mission in the world. Although UNAMID is commended for its excellent work in containing the situation in Darfur, it revealed the operational flaws of hybrid peacekeeping resulting from logistical and strategic constraints and issues with the preparedness of some contingents.

Situation in Somalia: In January 2007, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union set up the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) with the full support of the United Nations. AMISOM continues to provide support to the Federal Government of Somalia in its efforts to stabilize the country and foster political dialogue and reconciliation; facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid; and create the conditions necessary for the reconstruction and sustainable development of Somalia. AMISOM benefits from a United Nations logistical support package, bilateral donations and voluntary contributions through a United Nations-managed trust fund. The European Union provides the resources needed for the payment of

troop allowances and other related expenses, within the framework of the African Peace Facility. The United Nations also put in place the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia (UNSOA) (see Security Council resolution 1863 (2009)), a field support operation led by the Department of Field Support of the United Nations Secretariat. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) (see Security Council resolution 2102 (2013)) was also established to provide the United Nations "good offices" functions and a range of strategic policy advice in support of the peace and reconciliation process of the Federal Government. UNSOM has instruction from the United Nations to align closely, among others, with AMISOM, IGAD, the European Union and other regional, bilateral and multilateral partners.

Situation in Mali: AFISMA, the joint African Union-ECOWAS mission, was launched in Mali and authorized by the Security Council by its resolution 2085 (2012). AFISMA helped Mali regain control of its territorial integrity before its authority was transferred to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in July 2013. The European Union provided essential resources to AFISMA and France sent its own troops to oust Islamic militants in the north of Mali.

Situation in the Central African Republic: The Economic Community of Central African States Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX) was re-hatted into MISCA, the African Union-led and European Union-backed peacekeeping mission established by Security Council resolution 2127 (2013) to stabilize the country. MISCA is currently being transferred to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), which will incorporate peacekeeping missions from more countries. The swift deployments of MISCA and the French Operation Sangaris forces proved critical to saving the lives of civilians and preventing an even greater tragedy in the Central African Republic. However, given the scale and geographic breadth of the crisis, the security requirements on the ground far exceeded the capabilities and the number of international troops deployed. Consequently, the Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, decided to establish a United Nations peacekeeping operation (see Security Council resolution 2149 (2014)). MISCA is mandated to establish a suitable environment for a United Nations peacekeeping operations deployment before the transfer of mandate from MISCA to MINUSCA on 25 September 2014, and the United Nations is to provide logistical support.

Situation in South Sudan: Recently in South Sudan, in the face of escalating violence and humanitarian crisis, IGAD deployed a robust force of three battalions to protect civilians and IGAD monitors. Mandated by the Security Council to operate under the unified command and control of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Force Commander, the IGAD force receives financial and logistical support from the United Nations.

IV. Scope of the open debate

The participation of regional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security has added value, and their increasing role requires less of an ad hoc coordination process and more of a streamlined framework to adequately cope

with inevitable challenges related to resources, preparedness, and political and operational aspects of cooperation, thus begging the questions: What forms will future missions take and how will organizations pool their resources and allocate responsibilities? What should future partnerships look like and, based on past and current experiences, how can we best prepare to meet major challenges ahead?

Many of the regional and subregional organizations face the same resource constraints in the conduct of their peacekeeping activities, thus highlighting the importance of matching resources to mandates, irrespective of which organization has been assigned to implement those mandates. The mandated mission should receive adequate funds and other necessary resources, including troops that are appropriately prepared. In particular, the African Union has had missions in the field for nearly a decade, and while it has proven its ability to deploy rapidly in the absence of a United Nations presence, it has often struggled to get the equipment it needs and to build up its headquarters capacity, which is currently the case in the Central African Republic and Somalia.

V. Proposed issues to be discussed

Against this backdrop, participants in the open debate should consider the following issues in their statements:

1. Political

- Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and what it encompasses; the applicability of the Charter to the partnerships between the United Nations and regional or even subregional arrangements and regional economic communities, such as ECOWAS, the Economic Community of Central African States and others.
- **Spelling out command and control**. Effective command and control of operations underpin both success and credibility; yet this is an area where there is room for improvement. More can be done to strengthen the role of the headquarters in providing strategic guidance and support, and the mission command and control structures in relation to the conduct of operations, in order to ensure that operations are managed effectively.
- **Institutionalizing flexibility**. Comparative advantages have come into play in various forms in support for African peace support operations to date, but largely on an ad hoc basis. Greater attention should be given to understanding how effective collaboration could be attained, and to developing mechanisms of coordination that can be activated if need be.
- **Responsibility-sharing**. Who does what? Complementary roles between the United Nations and regional organizations under the new peacekeeping framework in Africa.
- **Comparative advantages of the regional interventions**. The transitions in Mali and the Central African Republic have demonstrated the complementary roles of regional economic communities, the African Union and the United Nations, building on comparative advantages of all three, ranging from force generation and rapid and robust deployments (African Union/regional

economic communities) to multidimensional peacekeeping missions (United Nations).

2. Operational

- If the United Nations is to rely more on regional arrangements or even neighbours to respond to crises swiftly in a deterrent fashion, there is a demonstrated need to invest more in terms of support in equipment, logistics, and training; this is more evident in Somalia, the Central African Republic and Mali.

- **Upgrading mission support**. Efficient logistics systems are essential to operational effectiveness; yet they are severely lacking. This has made African missions entirely reliant on the support of other actors, such as NATO for airlift, the United States of America for the contracting of logistical service providers or the United Nations for comprehensive support packages, as in the case of Somalia. While significant logistical capability resides within African Member States, it has not been tapped. Attention also needs to be given to a support model that relies on the outsourcing of service delivery, as the United Nations has done. These issues will have to be addressed, if African peace support operations are to be deployed independent of the goodwill of others.

- **Improving joint planning**. Proper planning has been a key challenge. On numerous occasions the Security Council rejected African Union plans to deploy a mission, owing to observed gaps in planning and insufficient information. The planning processes for African peace support operations are believed to have often been undertaken ad hoc, at times in an uncoordinated fashion. Yet some of the best results were attained where planning processes brought together the various departments and divisions within the African Union Commission and the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms, or where they were undertaken jointly with the United Nations.

- The most recent planning initiatives between the African Union and the United Nations on Somalia, the joint planning between ECOWAS and the African Union on Mali and the current coordination between the United Nations and the African Union in phasing out MISCA and transferring the mandate to MINUSCA bear testament to this, and serve as models for the future. If better results are to be achieved, the planning capacities available at the African Union and the regional economic communities and regional mechanisms will have to be reinforced, and Member States and partners will have to invest more in strengthening the role of the strategic headquarters in Addis Ababa and the planning elements in the regions.

3. Financial

- In 2008, the Security Council held a debate on strengthening relationships between the United Nations and regional organizations, consequentially adopting resolution 1809 (2008), in which the Council welcomed the establishment of a joint African Union-United Nations panel to consider options for supporting African Union peacekeeping operations. The Prodi panel, as it was known, explored how the United Nations and the African Union could enhance the predictability, the sustainability and the flexibility of

financing for United Nations-mandated peace operations undertaken by the African Union. A few of the key recommendations of the panel's report included:

- United Nations and African Union to take concrete steps to strengthen their mutual relationship and develop a more effective partnership when addressing issues on the joint agenda.
- Use United Nations-assessed funding for African Union-led and United Nations-authorized peacekeeping operations on a case-by-case basis, for no longer than six months, to be provided mainly in kind and only when there is an intention to transition to a United Nations peacekeeping operation within six months.
- Establish a voluntary-based multi-donor trust fund to focus on comprehensive capacity-building for conflict prevention and resolution and institution-building.
- African Union to consider developing its logistics capacity through innovative options.
- Establish an African Union-United Nations team to examine the detailed modalities to implement the recommendations of the report.

– No progress has been made since the Prodi report was issued in December 2009. Additionally, there have been efforts at the African Union level to initiate alternative ways of supporting African Union peace operations, including the Obasanjo panel last year, but, again, no progress has been made on that either. So how do we secure predictable funding when funding constraints have impacted every African operation to date? New modes of cooperation, and financial mechanisms that provide the required levels of financial predictability and sustainability, will need to be established.

VI. Format and outcome

The meeting will be an open debate chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Rwanda, Hon. Louise Mushikiwabo. The Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will be invited to brief. An outcome document is expected.

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General Assembly
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General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 8 July 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

The situation on the ground in Occupied Palestine is deteriorating at an alarming rate owing to the escalation of Israel's latest campaign of military aggression, which began on 12 June 2014, against the Palestinian people. In particular, the occupying Power has intensified its onslaught against the besieged Gaza Strip, in grave breach of international law, including international humanitarian law and the relevant provisions regarding the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and in grave breach of the prohibition of reprisals and collective punishment against the civilian population under occupation.

Palestinian civilian casualties are tragically mounting as a result of this brutal and criminal Israeli onslaught. Since my letter to you yesterday, the occupying Power has launched more than 150 military airstrikes deliberately targeting civilian areas in the Gaza Strip, killing at least 22 Palestinians and injuring more than 100 civilians, including women, children and the elderly. The intensification of Israel's aggression against the 1.7 million Palestinians imprisoned in the Gaza Strip by Israel's immoral blockade threatens to further destabilize the dangerous situation on the ground and fully ignite yet another round of deadly violence.

Today, 8 July 2014, Israeli jets and naval gunfire struck at several civilian areas in Gaza, bringing life to a standstill and deepening fear and panic among the already-traumatized Palestinian civilian population. The destructive, lethal attacks by the occupying Power have been widespread, targeting many homes and civilian infrastructure in areas all over Gaza. Among the dead in the past 24 hours were six children, two of them under five years of age, in addition to a 13-year-old child and a 14-year-old child. Also among those killed were: Mohammed Habib and his 19-year-old son, Mousa, who were killed after an airstrike hit a vehicle in the Al-Shujaiyeh neighbourhood, in Gaza City, and Fakri Saleh Ajjouri, who was killed after an airstrike on his motorcycle near Abraj Al-Sheikh Zayed, in the northern

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Gaza Strip. Abduallah Kaware, Mohammad Ashour (age 13), Riyad Kaware, Mahmoud Judeh, Bakir Mahmoud Judeh (age 22), Ammar Mohammad Judeh (age 22) and Hussein Mohammad Kaware (age 14) were also all brutally murdered when an Israeli rocket obliterated their home.

Further escalation of this inhumane military aggression by the occupying Power against the Gaza Strip will only ensure the loss of more innocent civilian lives among the occupied and defenceless Palestinian population. Statements by Israeli officials, including the Prime Minister of Israel, who stated that the military operation against Gaza would be expanded, including a possible ground invasion into Gaza, reveal the true intention of the occupying Power to intensify the military aggression and plunge the area into another deadly and destructive cycle of violence. In this regard, I must draw attention to the fact that Israeli occupying forces, including tanks, trucks, armoured vehicles, bulldozers and buses, are amassing near the Gaza border, and 40,000 so-called Israeli reservists have been mobilized. Clearly, the situation before us demands the attention of the international community, particularly the Security Council, which is duty-bound to act to maintain international peace and security and, in accordance with international humanitarian law, ensure protection for the Palestinian people under this savage military occupation.

We thus reiterate our urgent appeal to the Security Council to uphold its duties under the Charter of the United Nations and undertake the necessary action to bring an end to this Israeli aggression and to protect the Palestinian civilian population. What is being perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian people constitutes a grave breach of all norms of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the wilful killing of civilians and reprisals against the civilian population by the occupying Power. War crimes are clearly being perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian people and this must be unequivocally condemned and stopped. A strong message must be sent to Israel, the occupying Power, to cease immediately its military campaign and abide by the law, in order to de-escalate this dangerous situation, to promote calm, and, most importantly, to save innocent civilian lives.

This letter is in follow-up to our 503 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 7 July 2014 (A/ES-10/636-S/2014/473), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

United Nations S/2014/480

Security Council

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Third report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013)

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) and covers developments pertaining to the issues of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, since the issuance of my previous report, dated 14 March 2014 (S/2014/191).

2. The reporting period witnessed continuing enhancement of bilateral relations between Iraq and Kuwait. On 17 and 18 March, my Special Representative for Iraq visited Kuwait and met His Highness the Emir, the Emir's Adviser, the Prime Minister, the First Deputy Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and other senior officials, as well as the National Committee for Missing Persons and Prisoners of War Affairs. Kuwaiti interlocutors highlighted Kuwait-Iraq relations as a very positive development in the region and expressed their wish to see my Special Representative, my Deputy Special Representative and other officials of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) more frequently in Kuwait to exchange information and ideas on the way forward with regard to the Mission's mandated tasks.

3. In another positive development, the legal obstacles to Kuwait's repossession of its consular premises in Basra are expected to be resolved soon, the current occupant agreeing to move out. The long-held plans for Kuwait to reopen its consulate there are thus set to come to fruition.

II. Recent activities with regard to the repatriation and return of all Kuwaiti and third-country nationals, or their remains

4. With a view to carrying out his responsibilities under resolution 2107 (2013), my Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs at UNAMI held meetings in Baghdad with relevant Iraqi interlocutors, including Arkan Saleh, Deputy Minister for Human Rights and head of the Iraqi delegation to the Technical Subcommittee of the Tripartite Commission; Ambassador Walid Shiltagh, who heads the Iraqi interministerial committee on missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives; Patrick Youssef, head of the delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Iraq, and members of the diplomatic corps.

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5. On 17 March, my Special Representative met with the Chairman and members of the National Committee for Missing Persons and Prisoners of War Affairs. The Committee expressed its wish for Iraq to take full ownership of the humanitarian dossier and come up with initiatives to move the dossier forward. The Chairman expressed appreciation for the role of UNAMI, particularly in terms of its outreach to Iraqi government officials, its ability to contact people at local levels and to reach out to those members of the former regime in third countries holding information, and to facilitate new initiatives on the part of Iraq. My Special Representative assured the Committee that UNAMI would do all within its ability to source information from the local level by activating its Governorate Liaison Officers network, which is present in most of the Governorates in Iraq. In addition, UNAMI would assist in raising international awareness and work closely with the Government of Iraq on this humanitarian issue. The Committee also noted that the observer status of UNAMI would be settled during the next meeting of the Tripartite Commission, scheduled for October.

6. On 19 March, my Special Representative met the Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maliki, and debriefed him on his visit to Kuwait. The Prime Minister underlined the missing persons issue as a humanitarian matter, and assured my Special Representative that Iraq would make all resources available in the search for missing Kuwaiti persons and property and the national archives. He also stressed that Iraq had no interest in keeping Kuwaiti documents, much less the national archives, and Iraq stood ready to act on any piece of information for their location and return.

7. On 25 March and 13 May, the Iraqi interministerial committee on missing Kuwaiti nationals convened under the auspices of the Ministry of Human Rights. The committee reviewed progress in acquiring new information on burial sites and reaching out to known witnesses and informants, both within and outside Iraq. My Deputy Special Representative reiterated the availability of the good offices of UNAMI to facilitate Iraqi efforts to reach out to members of the former regime who might possess relevant information but are not in a position to cooperate with the Government of Iraq. He urged the interministerial committee to provide as much information as possible on such potential informants. On 28 May, my Deputy Special Representative put an Iraqi witness in contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a view to identifying a grave site inside Kuwait. UNAMI is working with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Human Rights to take the interview process forward.

8. On 2 June, my Deputy Special Representative facilitated a meeting between Arkan Saleh and Duncan Spinner, head of the Iraqi operations of the International Commission on Missing Persons, an organization with experience in finding human remains in post-conflict settings. UNAMI proposed that the Commission make a comprehensive proposal to build forensic capacity and assist searches using the latest technology, including cost-effective drones and trained sniffer dogs. The Commission is working on a proposal to be presented to the Ministry of Human Rights and for consideration by the Council of Ministers. Earlier in May, the Council of Ministers had turned down a proposal from an overseas archaeologist, routed through the Technical Subcommittee, citing "formidable" costs.

9. At his meetings with both Iraqi and Kuwait interlocutors, my Deputy Special Representative stressed that the use of science and technology and other innovative

but cost-effective methods could be helpful in the search for the missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals. In response to my Deputy Special Representative's proposal, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ran advertisements in 13 local daily newspapers starting on 27 May for three days on missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, with telephone numbers of both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy of Kuwait in Iraq, as well as assurances of anonymity and legal protection.

10. On 9 June, my Deputy Special Representative, during his quarterly visit to Kuwait, met with Khaled al-Jarallah, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs; Mohammad Abdullah Abulhasan, Adviser to the Emir; and Jasem al-Mubaraki, head of the Kuwaiti interministerial committee on missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, in addition to the Chairman and members of the National Committee for Missing Persons and Prisoners of War Affairs. He also met with Mohammad Bahr al-Uloom, Ambassador of Iraq to Kuwait, as well as the Chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of the United States of America and the Deputy Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

11. Kuwaiti officials were highly appreciative of the role of UNAMI in carrying out its mandated tasks under Security Council resolution 2107 (2013), noting the positive steps that UNAMI has taken to facilitate this dossier. The Chairman of the National Committee for Missing Persons and Prisoners of War Affairs called on my Deputy Special Representative to have more frequent meetings with the Committee, requesting the presence of UNAMI on the sidelines of the tripartite mechanism meetings until UNAMI could be formally included in an observer capacity.

12. From 9 to 19 March and from 5 to 15 May, a specialized team of the Ministry of Human Rights dug 337 and 327 trenches, respectively, in the Ain al-Tamur area in the Karbala Governorate. On 18 March, a witness was escorted to the Karbala site and identified 11 new coordinates, as a prelude to the excavation mission to be conducted later. From 14 to 22 June, a specialized team of the Ministries of Human Rights and Defence and the Medico-Legal Institute conducted exploratory and excavation works in Muthanna Governorate, digging 239 trenches. No human remains were found at any of the locations.

III. Recent activities with regard to the return of Kuwaiti property

13. On 8 June, my Deputy Special Representative observed a meeting of the Iraq-Kuwait joint interministerial committee on missing Kuwaiti property, the second of its kind since 15 May 2013. Ambassador Jasem al-Mubaraki and Ambassador Walid Shiltagh led the Kuwaiti and Iraqi delegations respectively.

14. Both sides agreed that they would meet on a biannual basis. My Deputy Special Representative, together with the heads of delegations, observed the official handover of Kuwaiti artefacts and co-signed the inventory of items. The items handed over included a large copper plate with the seal of Kuwait; 26 tape recordings belonging to Radio Kuwait; three paintings with the seal of the Kuwaiti National Museum; and about 4,500 books and publications in both Arabic and English. At their meetings with my Deputy Special Representative, Kuwaiti officials welcomed the return of the artefacts and books, while stressing the pending location and return of their national archives, which they considered to be part of Kuwait's "identity, culture and history". Iraqi officials, meanwhile, reiterated their request for

Kuwait to provide a description of the remaining lost properties to facilitate their location. My Deputy Special Representative underlined the need for Iraq to show results and renewed the commitment of UNAMI to working closely with the Iraqi authorities on this.

IV. Observations

15. I am pleased that the increasing mutual trust and cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait has created an environment conducive to progress on the return of the missing Kuwaiti persons and the national archives.

16. Tens of thousands of Iraqis and more than 300 Kuwaitis and third-country nationals remain unaccounted for from the pre-2003 decades. The issue of the missing is a tragic national issue that transcends international boundaries. Their families have demonstrated unyielding hope that one day the remains of their missing sons, brothers and husbands will be found. It is the duty of the Iraqi authorities, with assistance from the International Committee of the Red Cross and UNAMI, to see that those hopes are realized without any further loss of time. I therefore urge Iraq to take advantage of any available cost-effective modern technology to address this humanitarian issue and strive for concrete results. UNAMI, through my Special Representative and Deputy Special Representative, will continue to provide its full assistance to promote, support and facilitate Iraqi efforts in this regard.

17. The Tripartite Commission and its Technical Subcommittee and the steering role of the International Committee of the Red Cross remain central in addressing the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals. My appreciation goes out to the men and women committed to this humanitarian dossier. I am hopeful that UNAMI will be granted observer status in the Tripartite Commission and its Technical Subcommittee at the earliest opportunity to better fulfil its full mandated role.

18. I remain disappointed that no evidence or information has emerged so far that would indicate the whereabouts of Kuwait's national archives. I urge the Iraqi interministerial committee coordinating the search for missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, to meet more frequently and to take advantage of the assistance of UNAMI in this matter. I call on the Government of Iraq to undertake ever greater endeavours on this issue.